

who are at Guantánamo Bay. Senator MCCONNELL and Senator SPECTER and I actually visited that naval base last week and learned a lot.

We have border security we are addressing in the Department of Defense appropriations bill that we passed a week and a half ago that is in conference and in our Homeland Security appropriations bill, both of which aggressively address border security. So we have border security. We have port security. We have the military commissions that are being addressed for those individuals at Guantánamo Bay. We have support for our troops in terms of maintaining our security through the Department of Defense appropriations bill that is currently in conference. And then we have the whole issue of surveillance.

Today we are going to finish on port security. We all know—and we are reminded by the events surrounding our reminiscences of 9/11 with that fifth anniversary—we are fighting a war against radical ideologues. These are militant extremists, and they have a single-minded goal of destroying our Nation. Increasingly, people are realizing that, but it is taking these reminiscences and the remembering of the great tragedy of 9/11, coupled with the reality of what very well could have happened to hundreds and, indeed, thousands of Americans if that plot had not been uncovered by the British.

We know the terrorists are not going to stop. And it is not just a war in one part of the world, it is a war against an ideology. They are not going to stop at anything. The enemy is creative. I mentioned the attacks that could have emerged out of the plot which was uncovered by the British. Who would have ever deemed imaginable a day when business travelers could not be carrying contact lens solution in their carry-on. It is because of an attempt with a "Gatorade" bomb.

The terrorists are always thinking. They are always thinking of how they can stay one step ahead of even what our imagination is. They are searching for our weak points. They are seeking ways to exploit our weak points. That is why we have to remain vigilant, and that is why we have to address these issues on the floor. The substance of the bill that is on the floor does just that, the port security bill. That is vigilance.

Nowhere is it clearer to me that we have to be vigilant than at America's 300 maritime ports of entry. We talk about border security. Well, part of border security is port security. It is a border we have to close and appropriately monitor to prevent the terrorists from doing us harm.

These ports are economic centers. As economic centers, our more than 300 sea and river ports are targets in and of themselves. For people who want to hurt us, want to hurt our economy, they can become a target. These ports become even more attractive when they are close to urban centers. These

ports facilitate the rapid dissemination of cargo from around the globe to each of our cities and towns. Thus, we know the terrorists, when they want to hurt us, would potentially address these ports.

We have done a lot to secure our ports, but the fact remains, they are too porous. That brings us back to the importance of this bill. The bill before us plugs the holes that exist. It toughens security standards for all cargo. And it strengthens and improves programs designed to screen cargo at foreign ports and secures the international supply chain from the very start to the very end.

Technologies have advanced. We have developed more accurate detection tools. But we are not using those tools throughout our system. We are not using them universally. Terrorists have access to stealthier weapons, and that is a huge vulnerability just asking to be exploited if we do not keep up, if we do not keep pace. That is why we must pass this bill tonight.

The bill establishes a risk-based grant program to help assist ports with training personnel and implementing new security standards. The men and women who operate our ports are our first line of defense. We have entrusted these stewards of security with a serious, with a grave responsibility.

Accordingly, the bill ensures that the Department of Homeland Security will move forward with background checks for all port workers so we know who is on the ground at these critical facilities. It sets up procedures for resuming port operations and trade safely and quickly after a terrorist attack to help minimize any effect or any shock to our economy. It establishes the appropriate protocols to ensure that if a terrorist does strike, our ports are not closed longer than necessary.

And importantly, we also need protocols in place so we do not reopen ports too early. An incident at a port could be a red herring, a distraction to disguise other, more damaging terrorist activities.

These are just a few of the highlights of the Port Security Improvement Act. At its core, it is a multipronged approach to plugging the holes that exist in port security. It institutionalizes multiple and redundant security layers. From the factory of origin to cargo container, from cargo container to port warehouse, from port warehouse to cargo ship, from cargo ship to the port of calling, and from the port of calling to the final destination, at each step this bill toughens our standards. We are making it harder for a terrorist's dirty bomb to hide anonymously in a cargo container. We are making it harder for terrorists to tamper with cargo containers. We are making it harder for terrorists to use our ports as target practice. And we are making it harder for terrorists to use our ports to stealthily gain access to the rest of our homeland.

The terrorists we face have a radical agenda. They are ever-vigilant in mon-

itoring and assessing our weaknesses and always looking for new ways to harm us. We must be ever-vigilant in identifying our weaknesses and minimizing and eradicating them. That is what this Port Security Improvement Act does. It is my hope my colleagues will join me in supporting it and in passing this important piece of legislation this afternoon.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 30 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REPUBLICANS ARE COMMITTED TO MAKING AMERICA SAFER

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I said yesterday I am thankful to be part of the Republican majority that understands that September 11, 2001, changed the way that we must look at the world. Republicans are committed to taking action and not just talking about making America safer.

We must track, capture, and eliminate our terrorist enemies before they attack us. We must provide the President and our military with every legal tool available to fight this war against Islamic extremists, and we must secure our homeland by securing our borders and ports.

Unfortunately, the Democratic Party does not seem to understand the true threat that we face with Islamic extremists. Instead, Senate Democrats continue to prove that they are dangerously naive about the grave danger of global terrorism.

Radical Islamic jihadists have made no secret of their goal, which is the complete subjugation of the world to their extreme form of Islamic nationalism.

Osama bin Laden said the attacks of 9/11 were "an unparalleled and magnificent feat of valor" and "a great step toward the unity of Muslims."